

# **Mornington Crescent: Prisoner of War Monument Design and Access Statement**

## **1.0 Historical Context**

During World War II, in 1942, Japanese forces invaded Burma from Thailand and seized the colony from British control. In order to support its forces in the Burma campaign, the Japanese Army used forced labour, about 180,000 Asian labourers and 60,000 allied prisoners of war (POWs) to construct the 415 km Thailand-Burma Railway. The railway took 1 year to build, during which around 90,000 Asian labourers and 16,000 Allied POWs died as a direct result of the project, including 6,318 British soldiers.

## **2.0 Site Location**

The traffic island at Millbrook Place, Mornington Crescent. (See *dwg 250 01, 250 02, 250 03*)  
Easting: 529181  
Northing: 183405

## **3.0 Applicant**

The Editor of the Camden New Journal, Eric Gordon.

## **4.0 The Proposal**

A modest memorial/monument commemorating British Prisoners of War (1939-1945) who died in camps in the Far East whilst building the Burma railway for Japanese forces.

## **5.0 Funding**

Funds have been donated as a result of an appeal in the Camden New Journal to pay for the memorial. There is a modest retainer to facilitate the erection and installation of the memorial, however additional funding may be required to complete the works.

## **6.0 Programme**

11.04 Architects have prepared schematic proposals for pre-planning application discussions with Camden Planning Department, and originally requested a pre-application meeting in December 2009.

This planning submission has been under review since February 2010.

Installation of the memorial could take place during the spring of 2011, with a ceremony planned for the official anniversary of the end of the war-  
2<sup>nd</sup> September 1945: *"the day for mourning of war dead and praying for peace"*

## **7.0 Design**

A rectangular granite memorial stone inscribed with text, supported on a facsimile railway track. The railway sleepers and track are used to draw attention to the POW's role in building railway's for the Japanese Army whilst held captive. (See *dwg 250 06*)

## **8.0 Landscaping**

Floor mounted pavement lighting is proposed to illuminate the memorial from dusk till late.

The site is maintained by Transport for London who will need to agree to its installation, the cost of the installation of the memorial and would be responsible for its continued maintenance.

## **9.0 Use**

The inclusion of a monument on the site aims to change the transitory use of the traffic island to a more recreational space and a place of reflection. *(See dwg 250 08)*

## **10.0 Illustration and Inscription**

The illustrator, Ronald Searle has agreed to donate one of his illustrations that were drawn whilst being held captive in prisoner of war camps in the Far East. The illustration features a fellow POW which will be engraved into the granite stone piece along with an inscription. *(See dwg 250 07)*

The inscription will be confirmed.

## **11.0 Expanded Brief**

Having looked critically at the context, 11.04 are of the opinion the traffic island is under-utilised and has the potential to become an attractive green recreational space, and a contributor to an integrated transport node, specifically:

- 12.1 Attractively landscaped green space.
- 12.2 European style recreation space with opportunities for sitting, reading, lunching.
- 12.3 Bicycle parking/bicycle hire – linked to tube station
- 12.4 Black cab stand – providing support to commuters arriving by tube
- 12.5 Florist stand – utilising the underground toilet
- 12.6 French style male urinals – to avoid urinating in the street

## **12.0 RIBA London: Forgotten Spaces Competition**

The above expanded brief was submitted to the RIBA London Competition “Forgotten Spaces” intended to identify public spaces which can be upgraded to provide green recreational spaces within London. It was shortlisted for a prize and published in the Architect’s Journal. *(See dwg 250 09)*

## **13.0 Consultation**

As part of the Planning Application the people of Camden could be invited to contribute to the consultation on the future of this space. 11.04 propose to make their drawings available to Camden New Journal to assist that consultation process through the newspaper.